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Dear State Commercial Permit Holder:

In December of 2005, the Division of Marine Fisheries (*MarineFisheries*) sent you your 2006 commercial permit renewal packet including information on a new State Waters Multispecies Groundfish Endorsement (GE). Based on comments given at public hearings on the proposed Groundfish Endorsement (GE), *MarineFisheries* has modified certain eligibility requirements for receipt of the GE and is thus providing this notice to commercial permit holders who may now qualify and wish to apply for a GE. Details on eligibility requirements and how to apply for a GE follow.

GE Modified Details:

- Anyone who held a state-issued commercial permit to take finfish on November 4, 2004, renewed that permit for 2005, and does not have a federal Multispecies permit for the applicant vessel may apply for a GE to harvest and possess from waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth the 10 regulated Multispecies groundfish and monkfish up to the daily limits set by state regulations.
- The requirement that you verify at least 1,000 pounds in a year of past landings of groundfish (or 500 pounds in 2 consecutive years) has been dropped; at this time there will be no “filter” applied to a person’s fishing history to determine eligibility for a GE.
- The restriction in regards to holding a federal Multispecies groundfish or monkfish permit still applies; an applicant vessel that has a federal Multispecies groundfish or monkfish permit will not qualify for a GE.
- Federally permitted vessels with appropriate state commercial permits may still fish in waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth as part of the federal management programs: Days-At-Sea, limited access hand-gear, or open-access hand gear.
- An applicant who chooses to surrender their federal Multispecies and monkfish permit may apply for a GE. However, a GE will not be issued to anyone who leases their allocated days-at-sea (DAS) or sells or transfers the federal permit; the federal permit must be **surrendered** to qualify for the GE.
- A GE only will be issued as an endorsement on one of the Commonwealth’s commercial boat permits, including coastal and offshore lobster permits. Commercial fishermen who hold an Individual or Rod & Reel permit and otherwise qualify will be given the opportunity to upgrade to a commercial boat permit.
- Applications for a GE will only be accepted during the 2006 renewal period, thereafter GEs will be subject to renewals only; no new GEs will be issued after the 2006 licensing period.
- Commercial permit holders who do not have the GE will be allowed to land and sell up to 75 pounds of cod taken from state waters.
- An annual catch report will be required for fishermen issued a GE.

Fishermen who now qualify and want to apply for the GE must sign and return the enclosed affidavit to DMF Licensing, 251 Causeway St., Suite 100, Boston, MA 02114. Please note that this affidavit replaces the affidavit previously mailed out with your renewal documents. If you have already renewed your commercial permit for 2006 but want to obtain a GE, please mail a photocopy of your permit along with the required fee of \$30 (\$60 for non-residents). Individual and Rod & Reel permit holders who qualify and want to apply for a GE must also include the required fee to upgrade to a commercial boat permit.

The permitting staff at *MarineFisheries* apologizes for the delays in permit issuance and the confusion over GE eligibility. We are working as quickly as possible to resolve all outstanding permitting issues, and appreciate your patience as we work through this renewal season.

STATE WATERS GROUND FISH ENDORSEMENT AFFIDAVIT

The State Waters Multispecies Groundfish Endorsement (GE) is required for any commercial operation catching, landing, and possessing groundfish in state waters, but not fishing under a federal Multispecies or monkfish permit. In addition to monkfish, the ten federally managed groundfish species covered by the GE are cod, haddock, pollock, redfish, white hake, yellowtail flounder, winter flounder, windowpane flounder, American plaice and witch flounder.

The GE will be limited to those permit holders who held any Massachusetts commercial fishing permit (excluding shellfish & seaworms and seasonal lobster) on 11/04/2004* and renewed their permit in 2005. Commercial permit holders who do not have the GE will be allowed to land and sell up to 75 pounds of cod taken from state waters. Permit holders landing groundfish on vessels authorized to fish under a federal permit for Multispecies groundfish or monkfish do not qualify for - nor do they need - this endorsement.

*11/04/2004: the control date established by the Commission for commercial hook and line fishing.

If you wish to add the GE to your commercial permit, please complete, sign, and return this form along with:

- Your renewal application or a copy of your 2006 permit if you have already renewed
- Endorsement fee (\$30.00 for Massachusetts residents and \$60 for non-residents)

Complete the following information and sign the signature line below if you meet the eligibility requirements:

1. I held a Massachusetts Commercial fishing permit with the DMF Permit ID: _____ on 11/04/2004 and renewed that permit in 2005.
2. The vessel currently associated with the DMF Permit ID: _____ (listed above) is named: _____, MS/Doc#: _____, and this vessel is not authorized to fish by a federal Multispecies or monkfish permit.

If you held a federal permit authorized for Multispecies groundfish or monkfish during the 2005 fishing year, but have surrendered your federal permit, you must check the box below to indicate your acknowledgement of conditions attached to the issuance of the GE:

☐ I have surrendered my federal permit authorized for Multispecies groundfish or monkfish to NOAA Fisheries in order to obtain the State Waters Multispecies Groundfish Endorsement (GE). I understand that cancelling my federal permit, failing to renew my federal permit, transferring my federal permit, leasing my Days-At-Sea associated with my federal permit or any other temporary actions on my federal permit do not constitute permanent surrender of my federal permit and will not qualify me for a GE. I understand that obtaining a federal Multispecies or monkfish permit on a vessel that has a GE will result in forfeiture of the GE and may result in a fine, imprisonment or loss of license (322 CMR 7.01 & MGL, Chapter 130, Sections 2,21,33).

I hereby certify that I have read and understand the above information on the Groundfish Endorsement

Signed by _____ this _____ day of _____, 2006,

Print Name: _____ Permit ID#: _____

Knowingly falsifying any information contained within this affidavit constitutes the act of perjury and may result in a fine, imprisonment or loss of license (MGL, Chapter 130, Sections 2, 21 & 33).